

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough consideration provided the present application. Claims 1-29 are now present in the application. Claims 1, 4, 5, 11, 17-19, 21, 22 and 27-29 have been amended. Claims 1, 19 and 29 are independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-10, 17, 19-21, 27 and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Misra, U.S. Patent Application Publication No 2006/0031357, in view of Hackleman, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0088286. Claims 11, 13, 22 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Misra in view of Hackleman, and further in view of Young, Microsoft® Office System Inside Out: 2003 Edition. Claims 12 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Misra in view of Hackleman and Young, and further in view of Massanelli, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0133645. Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Misra in view of Hackleman, and further in view of Hussey, U.S. Patent No. 6,230,156. Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Misra in view of Hackleman and Hussey, and further in view of Massanelli. Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Misra in view of Hackleman, Hussey and Massanelli, and further in view of Hsiao, U.S. Patent No. 6,438,582. Claims 18 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Misra in view of Hackleman, and further in view of Lin, U.S. Patent No. 7,149,733. Claim 25 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being

unpatentable over Misra in view of Hackleman, and further in view of Massanelli. Claim 26 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Misra in view of Hackleman and Massanelli, and further in view of Hsiao. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Complete discussions of the Examiner's rejections are set forth in the Office Action, and are not being repeated here.

In light of the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections have been obviated and/or rendered moot. Without conceding to the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to timely advance the prosecution of the application, as the Examiner will note, independent claims 1, 19 and 29 have been amended.

Independent claim 1 recites a combination of elements including "detecting means for monitoring the flow of in- and outbound electronic mails on the mail server for a specified set of users, and intercepting the in- and outbound e-mails; journalising means for creating a notification record of a set of e-mail information data for each of the intercepted electronic mails, wherein the users can decide if intercepted electronic mails are to be available for a search query, whereby electronic mails are journalized and shared between a multiple of users; an electronic mail manager database (EMM-DB) for storing said notification records and the associated electronic mails in a relation database so that the notification records and the associated electronic mails are archived and made accessible for the users in the multiple users environment by a search query; a query builder (EQB) for creating predefined and ad-hoc search queries that can be applied / submitted to the EMM-DB, wherein a search query is selecting a user-defined series of information data from the notification records in the electronic mail management database irrespective of recipients or senders of said electronic mails; a query

database (QUERY-DB) for storing said predefined and ad-hoc search queries; user access means for providing all users access to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB, whereby the electronic mails are searchable independent of senders and recipients; and access control means (EAC) for defining user access rights to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB.”

Independent claim 19 recites a combination of steps including “monitoring the flow of in- and outbound electronic mails on the mail server to and from the server users, and intercepting at least a selection of the in- and outbound e-mails, creating a notification record of a set of e-mail information data for each intercepted electronic mail and providing that the users can decide if intercepted electronic mails are to be available for a search query, whereby electronic mails are journalized and shared between a multiple of users; storing said notification records and the associated electronic mails in an electronic mail manager database (EMM-DB) so that the notification records and the associated electronic mails are archived and made accessible for the users in the multiple users environment by a search query; creating predefined and ad-hoc search queries by a query builder (EQB), said search queries can be applied / submitted to the EMM-DB and wherein a search query is selecting a user-defined series of information data from the notification records in the electronic mail management database irrespective of recipients or senders of said electronic mails; storing said predefined and ad-hoc search queries in a query database (QUERY-DB); providing all users access to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB, whereby the electronic mails are searchable independent of senders and recipients; and defining user access rights to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB by access control means (EAC).”

Independent claim 29 recites a combination of elements including “computer program code means for providing detecting means for monitoring the flow of in- and outbound electronic mails on the mail server to and from the server users, and intercepting at least a selection of the in- and outbound e-mails; computer program code means for providing journalising means for creating a notification record of a set of e-mail information data for each intercepted electronic mail wherein the users can decide if intercepted electronic mails are to be available for a search query, whereby electronic mails are journalized and shared between a multiple of users; computer program code means for storing said notification records and the associated electronic mails in an electronic mail manager database (EMM-DB) for storing at least said notification record and each electronic mail in a manner accessible for the users in the multiple users environment, so that the notification records and the associated electronic mails are archived and made accessible for the users in the multiple users environment by a search query; computer program code means for creating predefined and ad-hoc search queries by a query builder (EQB), said search queries can be applied / submitted to the EMM-DB and wherein a search query is selecting a user-defined series of information data from the notification records in the electronic mail management database irrespective of recipients or senders of said electronic mails; computer program code means for storing said predefined and ad-hoc search queries in a query database (QUERY-DB); computer program code means for providing all users access to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB, whereby the electronic mails are searchable independent of senders and recipients; and computer program code means for defining user access rights to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB by access control means (EAC).”

Support for the amendments to claims 1, 19 and 29 can be found in paragraphs [0024], [0027], [0046], [0111] and [0117]-[0125] of the U.S. Patent Application Publication of the present application. Applicants respectfully submit that the above combinations of elements and steps as set forth in independent claims 1, 19 and 29 are not disclosed nor suggested by the references relied on by the Examiner for the following reasons.

The Examiner alleged that Misra in paragraph [0066] and [0092] discloses the journalising means as set forth in claims 1 and 29 and the corresponding step as set forth in claim 19. However, Misra in paragraph [0066] and [0092] simply discloses that an Archive Database holds records including the index or metadata describing the e-mails such as Sender, Recipient, Subject, etc., and the Message Map for specific message and a pointer to the physical location of the file. However, Misra nowhere discloses that its system allows the users to decide if intercepted electronic mails are to be available for a search query.

More specifically, Misra simply discloses a traditional e-mail management system with the added functionality of archiving. Misra discloses an e-mail management system with a common mail server with a central storage for storing and retrieving the users e-mail. Therefore, Misra teaches a solution based on the traditional mailbox paradigm. More specifically, Misra's replay system discloses re-delivering, replying, forwarding and previewing of e-mail messages. All of these features are part of a traditional e-mail management system because the electronic mail is delivered to the individual user's mailbox. The "user" defined in paragraphs [0073] of Misra is defined as follows: "[a] 'User' in this document refers to a typical user of the organizations messaging system (e.g. employee). Additional privileges may be accorded to others such as administrators or operators." However, this typical user in traditional e-mail

management system does not have the access to the other users' messages. Instead, in a traditional e-mail management system like Misra, each user's e-mails are *strictly private*. Therefore, the messages in the mail management system disclosed in Misra are not shared between the users.

On the contrary, the present invention evolves around the need for sharing of e-mails and the idea of changing the mailbox centric paradigm in the e-mail management. This involves removing the individual user's personal privacy protected mailbox which does not match a modern multi user business environment. Issues relating to privacy and security are then touched upon, handled and solved by disclosing that user access control can be provided through access to a query database, which acts as the filter towards the central e-mail database.

The present invention in paragraph [0082] of its U.S. Patent Application Publication states that *e-mails are journalized based on the response of the users*, which is reflected in the recitation "the users can decide if intercepted electronic mails are to be available for a search query" as recited in claims 1, 19 and 29. This helps to ensure the privacy protection that is standard in a traditional e-mail system but might be lost if e-mails are not physically distributed to each users private e-mail account.

In particular, the present application in paragraphs [0098] and [0104] of its U.S. Patent Application Publication states:

[0098] The net effect of the above is that all e-mail correspondence of a specific user, is stored inside this users mailbox. The server will vigorously privacy protect the e-mail stored inside the mailbox.

[0099] In other words access to the contents of each b_i is protected by the server, and access is only allowed on a per user basis.

[0100] In a modern day multi user business environment, this privacy protection causes problems, since the partitioning function does not match actual business requirements. Business deals are made between companies, irrespective of the individual persons participating in the negotiations. Hence the need to look at e-mails stored inside other users mailboxes.

[0101] Users try to handle this situation by forwarding and cc'ing e-mails, thus increasing the load of e-mails which need to be handled.

[0102] The root cause is actually that e-mails are stored and handled in a mailbox centric manner. This invention suggests doing away with the mailbox completely.

[0103] Once the mailbox has been removed from the server reception and sending of e-mails are significantly simplified, as there are no considerations regarding assignment to mailboxes.

[0104] Viewing the relevant e-mails is however made more complicated. Traditionally a mailbox not only serves the purpose of privacy protection, but it also functions as a static filtering mechanism, for reducing the volume of e-mails a user is presented with.

The present invention breaks with the normal mailbox centric approach by storing and keeping all the e-mails in a database (EMM-DB) and having users accessing the e-mails through dynamic search queries. Therefore, the normal filtering of e-mails by distribution to personal mailboxes is replaced *by a dynamic filtering by journalizing the e-mails and search queries*. Search queries are stored in a query database (QUERY-DB). The normal privacy protection provided by the mailboxes is replaced *by letting users determine if e-mails in the EMM-DB are to be available for search queries and having access control means for defining user access rights to queries in the QUERY-DB and e-mails in the EMM-DB*.

This new filtering mechanism for sharing e-mails in a central database and still protecting privacy is clearly absent from Misra and any other utilized references. Misra simply relates to storage management, compliance and legal discovery. This does not involve e-mail privacy and

security because only *privileged personnel* are allowed general access to the e-mail archive. Although Misra allows that the users have access to the archive, this access is only to the users' own e-mails. Misra is silent on e-mail sharing and user collaboration, and one skilled in the art would not be motivated to break the mailbox centric approach when consulting the teaching of Misra.

Therefore, Misra fails to teach "journalising means for creating a notification record of a set of e-mail information data for each of the intercepted electronic mails, wherein the users can decide if intercepted electronic mails are to be available for a search query, whereby electronic mails are journalized and shared between a multiple of users" as recited in claim 1, "creating a notification record of a set of e-mail information data for each intercepted electronic mail and providing that the users can decide if intercepted electronic mails are to be available for a search query, whereby electronic mails are journalized and shared between a multiple of users" as recited in claim 19, and "computer program code means for providing journalising means for creating a notification record of a set of e-mail information data for each intercepted electronic mail wherein the users can decide if intercepted electronic mails are to be available for a search query, whereby electronic mails are journalized and shared between a multiple of users" as recited in claim 29.

As mentioned, Misra simply discloses that *the users can only gain access to their own e-mails they have sent or received*. Therefore, Misra also fails to teach "a query builder (EQB) for creating predefined and ad-hoc search queries that can be applied / submitted to the EMM-DB, wherein a search query is selecting a user-defined series of information data from the notification records in the electronic mail management database *irrespective of recipients or senders of said*

electronic mails” as recited in claim 1, “creating predefined and ad-hoc search queries by a query builder (EQB), said search queries can be applied / submitted to the EMM-DB and wherein a search query is selecting a user-defined series of information data from the notification records in the electronic mail management database *irrespective of recipients or senders of said electronic mails*” as recited in claim 19, and “computer program code means for creating predefined and ad-hoc search queries by a query builder (EQB), said search queries can be applied / submitted to the EMM-DB and wherein a search query is selecting a user-defined series of information data from the notification records in the electronic mail management database *irrespective of recipients or senders of said electronic mails*” as recited in claim 29.

In addition, Misra in paragraph [0066] simply discloses the creation of the mail Archive Database. Misra nowhere discloses a query database (QUERY-DB) for storing the predefined and adhoc search queries. Therefore, Misra fails to teach “a query database (QUERY-DB) for storing said predefined and ad-hoc search queries” as recited in claim 1, “storing said predefined and ad-hoc search queries in a query database (QUERY-DB)” as recited in claim 19, and “computer program code means for storing said predefined and ad-hoc search queries in a query database (QUERY-DB)” as recited in claim 29.

Furthermore, Misra also fails to teach “user access means for providing all users access to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB, whereby the electronic mails are searchable independent of senders and recipients” and “access control means (EAC) for defining user access rights to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB” as recited in claim 1, “providing all users access to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB, whereby the electronic mails are searchable independent of senders and

recipients” and “defining user access rights to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB by access control means (EAC)” as recited in claim 19, and “computer program code means for providing all users access to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB, whereby the electronic mails are searchable independent of senders and recipients” and “computer program code means for defining user access rights to queries in the QUERY-DB and electronic mails in the EMM-DB by access control means (EAC)” as recited in claim 29.

Hackleman fails to cure the deficiencies of Misra. In particular, Hackleman is related to how to enhance network collaboration by sharing information. Although Hackleman mentions the issues of privacy, security and secrecy when information is shared across a network, Hackleman only discusses these issues on a general level and does not specify any solutions. Therefore, the combination of Misra and Hackleman would still fails to teach the above-noted claimed features as set forth in claims 1, 19 and 29.

With regard to the Examiner’s reliance on the other secondary references, these references have only been relied on for their teachings related to some dependent claims. These references also fail to disclose the above combinations of elements and steps as set forth in independent claims 1, 19 and 29. Accordingly, these references fail to cure the deficiencies of Misra.

Accordingly, none of the references utilized by the Examiner individually or in combination teach or suggest the limitations of independent claims 1, 19 and 29 or their dependent claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 19 and

29 and their dependent claims clearly define over the teachings of the references relied on by the Examiner.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are respectfully requested.

Additional Cited References

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but rather to merely show the state of the art, no further comments are necessary with respect thereto.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Cheng-Kang (Greg) Hsu, Registration No. 61,007 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicants respectfully petition for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application.

Application No. 10/586,136
Amendment dated September 4, 2009
Reply to Office Action of March 6, 2009

Docket No.: 2836-0160PUS1

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: September 4, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Paul C. Lewis

Registration No.: 43,368

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant

